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Edina's Theaters – From Art Deco To Multiplexes



Photo by Mark Thompson

By Joe Sullivan, Freelance Writer and Edina resident

Asked to visualize an old movie theater built between 1915 and 1929, “Edinamites” past the age of 80 or so might imagine an elaborate “picture palace” with cherubs on the walls, plush carpets on the floor and crystal chandeliers hanging from the ceiling.

With a few notable exceptions, such as the restored State and Orpheum theaters in downtown Minneapolis, not many of those old theaters are still standing.

The arrival of movie sound technology in 1928, and the resulting growth in audiences, spurred a wave of theater building and renovation that continued through the 1930s. The extravagant theaters of the 1920s were terribly out of date and none of them had been built to accommodate the new “talking pictures.” Changing times called for a fresh approach, a new style.

Art Deco Theaters Flourished During the 1930s

It was another kind of theater. The neighborhood and small-town theaters—modest in scale, built or remodeled in the 1930s in the “Art Deco” style—had an aura of streamlined modernity and optimism.

Fortunately for us, Edina had two such Art Deco theaters. The Edina and Westgate theaters were both built during the “golden age of movies,” as the 1930s have come to be known. Unfortunately, only one of the two—the Edina—has survived.

The Westgate’s building still stands, but it is now part of the Edina Cleaners & Launderers plant.

In an article about neighborhood theaters entitled “Tickets to Fantasy,” Herbert Scherer, an art librarian and assistant professor of architecture at the University of Minnesota, observed that movie-going was a weekly ritual about the time of World War I.

“I don’t think it’s overstating it to say that going to the movies was a religious ritual for a lot of people,” Scherer said in a 1998 interview with *City Pages*. “Movies cost a dime or not much more. And [they] gave you a wonderful escape from the heat—because theaters were [some] of the first institutions to be air-conditioned—plus the dreariness of everyday life during the Depression.”

The smooth, flowing lines and colored lights of the Art Deco movie theater facades seem to personify the movies. Prominent vertical signs and rows of flashing lights arranged in streamlined curves were the most obvious characteristics of Art Deco theaters.

The Art Deco style, originally known as “Streamline Moderne,” was popping up in theater designs all over the country along with inventive technical improvements. In addition to air-conditioning, which was at a rather primitive stage of development at the time, new acoustics, softer seats and better lighting were introduced.

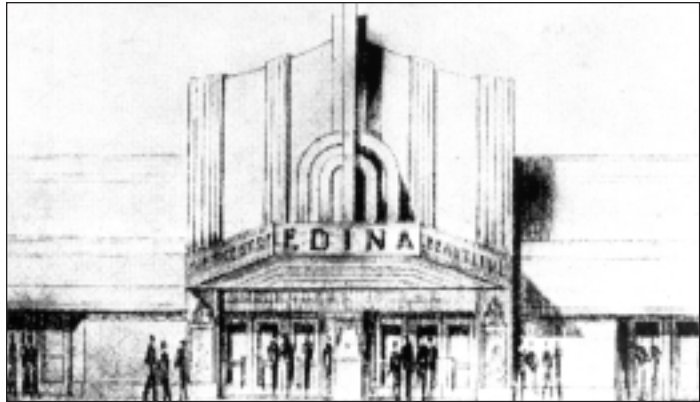
‘Bank Night’ Sold Theater Tickets

“Although giveaways were as old as show [business], bank

night gained popularity in the 1930s,” Kirk J. Busse wrote in his 1977 book “Show Houses—Twin Cities Style.” “Virtually every [neighborhood theater] was engaged in bank night or some other form of giveaway including books, kitchenware, even furniture.”

As a result, the neighborhood theater became the center of community activities—band concerts, weddings, funerals, high school plays and graduations—all held in local movie theaters.

Theater owners also offered the use of their facilities to local groups that needed space for meetings. One of the interesting features of the new Westgate Theater when it opened in 1935 on Sunnyside Road across from the new Convention Grill was



Minneapolis Tribune photo

This is a 1934 architect’s drawing of the proposed Edina Theater. The original design had a high tower and included several shops on each side of the theater lobby. The project called for 1,000 seats on the main floor and 300 in the balcony. The theater was built on the site of the Norris Dairy barns.

a community club and card room that offered catering service. During the 1930s, theater exteriors changed dramatically, too. Theater marquees were controversial at first. “Nobody ever thought of building a canopy over a sidewalk. It was City property,” said local architect Jack Liebenberg, the designer of the Edina Theater, which was built in 1934. When plans for a theater were announced in what Busse called “the posh Minneapolis suburb of Edina,” local objections developed against the construction of a proposed flashy movie sign and marquee. The opposition was strong enough to force the architects to alter the sign into a tower format with a minimum of lighting.

Liebenberg’s second design featured a small tower partially surrounded by a concave wall. The curved wall was later eliminated and the tower assumed more importance.

According to Liebenberg, “Travelers—lights that flash and give the appearance of moving—were not allowed in Edina, and to this day there are no flashing lights on the Edina Theater.” The Village Council finally revised plans for the theater sign and marquee on March 22, 1934.

The Edina Theater: Early ‘Streamline Moderne’ Example

Construction of the theater took only 90 days. While excavating the site, workmen unearthed a large cache of broken milk bottles—souvenirs of the Elgin Dairy, which had occupied the site before the Norris Creamery bought it.

Despite the Great Depression, the builders spared no expense. Originally estimated to cost \$80,000, costs rose to \$100,000 by opening day.

At the time, the Edina was one of the largest suburban theaters in Minnesota. It had a full-sized stage, lofts and stage lighting. The lobby was decorated with modern furniture. At one end was a mural depicting the historic Edina Mill. There was a built-in fireplace to keep the lobby cozy during the long Minnesota winters. It had its own nursery and special acoustical devices were available to aid the hard-of-hearing.

Snack bars were another innovation in theaters built during the late 1920s and 30s. According to *Minnesota Architecture* magazine, it was a University of Wisconsin professor named Charles Glass who first came up with the idea of selling food in theaters. He also organized a company that rented space in theaters for confection stands.

In their book “From the Barber’s Chair,” Vern Swanson and Tom Clark noted that the Edina Theater was 50th and France’s first air-conditioned building, using water from an artesian well to cool the theater. “The original, L-shaped parking lot was huge, extending south behind the theater building and east to France Avenue where the municipal parking ramp and Arby’s Restaurant are now located,” they wrote.

As a youngster growing up in southwest Minneapolis in the early 1940s, some of my fondest memories are of walking to 50th and France on Saturday to see a matinee movie at the Edina Theater. The White Grill was on 50th just east of France, and on our way to the theater we would stop there for an 11-cent hamburger. A small blue-and-white pot of baked beans cost only five or 10 cents more. Add the price of a ticket for the matinee, which was 12 cents, and you had a pretty inexpensive

way to spend a Saturday afternoon. After the movie, we would head for home through the peat bogs around Pershing Park and re-enact the adventures of “The Purple Phantom” or “The Green Hornet” we had seen at the theater.

Tornadoes Hit Edina Theater Sign in 1951 and 1981
The Edina Theater was hit by a tornado on July 21, 1951, and the top one-third of its tall, vertical sign was bent over. It was repaired, but 30 years later, on June 14, 1981, the sign was hit by another tornado and destroyed. It was replaced by an exact replica of the 1934 sign, which weighed 3,000 pounds and used 272 light bulbs. The Edina Heritage Preservation Board has begun discussions to protect the theater’s sign as a historical site.



The Edina Theater was offering \$750 in Bank Night prizes in this 1939 photo. The building had retail spaces on both sides of the theater lobby including the Brown Derby Café at right.

The Edina became a two-screen theater in 1976. Deluxe rocker-back seating was added in both auditoriums. A third screen was added in the late 1970s.

The Edina’s current owner, Cineplex/Odeon, closed the theater for extensive remodeling in 1989. Except for the historic front facade and the ticket booth, which was moved inside the foyer, the rest of the old cinema was demolished and replaced with a larger, two-story “multiplex” building. Inside, the new “Edina 4” has four wide-screen auditoriums—two upstairs and two on the main floor. Patrons walk on marble floors amid neon lighting and escalators whisk them upstairs. The new four-screen cinema opened Dec. 12, 1989.

Jack Liebenberg, Art Deco Theater Architect Extraordinaire

“The theater architect who was most active in the Twin Cities area and whose work was consistently of the highest quality was Jack Liebenberg,” Scherer said.

In 1916, Liebenberg graduated cum laude with the first graduating class of the University of Minnesota’s School of Architecture. Later, he taught architecture at the University for about a year and one of his students was Seeman Kaplan, who eventually became his brother-in-law and business partner.

Liebenberg first met Kaplan’s sister Raleigh when he visited the Kaplan home in Minneapolis as a dinner guest. In a 1957 interview by the *Minneapolis Star*, Raleigh remembered being “bored to death” with the idea of cooking dinner for her brother’s university professor. They were married in 1919. From 1929 to 1941, almost all of Liebenberg’s more than 200 theater designs were in the Art Deco style.



Jack J. Liebenberg

Minneapolis Public Library photo

In 1950, the couple moved into a new home at 5112 Ridge Road in Edina, designed by—who else?—Jack Liebenberg. It was one of more than 600 homes he designed during his 50-year career as an architect, and was not the first Edina house he designed. In the mid-1920s, Liebenberg had drawn the plans for seven elegant model homes for Sam Thorpe’s new Country Club development.

Seeman Kaplan died in 1963, but Liebenberg continued to practice until his retirement in 1980. He died in Minneapolis in 1985.

Westgate Theater Opening Also Caused Controversy
In 1931, the Morningside Parent and Teacher Association and the Woman’s Club officially expressed their disapproval of a proposal for a neighborhood movie theater in the then-independent village. The permit application was denied.

In June 1935, the Edina *Crier* reported results of a contest staged by the businessmen at 44th and France. It was designed to select a name for their growing commercial area. Westgate was the name chosen by the judges. Mrs. Paul Brown, 4206 Sunnyside Road, who submitted the winning name, was awarded a prize of \$75.

Morningside eventually issued a permit for a theater on Sunnyside near France and it opened in November 1935 as the Westgate Theater.

Designed by Minneapolis architect Perry E. Crosier, the Westgate was described in the October 1935 Edina *Crier* as having “... indirect lighting for exterior and interior. The interior decorations are modern in color and design, and the

air-conditioning, projection, seating and high-fidelity, wide-range sound are of the latest type.” With only 525 seats, the new Westgate Theater was smaller than the Edina Theater.

‘Harold and Maude’ Film Set a Record at Westgate

In the 1970s, few neighborhood cinemas screened films for more than a week. The greatest exception was Edina’s Westgate. It entered the history books in 1973-74 after showing the movie “Harold and Maude” for 114 consecutive weeks and two days, making it the longest-running film in Twin Cities history to that date. During its record-setting run at the Westgate, the film became a “cult favorite” with a cadre of committed fans, some of whom saw it many times.



In 1974, the marquee of the Westgate Theater offered best wishes to Gerry and Elmer Dennison, owners of the Dennison Dairy Store across Sunnyside Road, upon their retirement. The theater closed in 1977, apparently due to dwindling profits, and its vertical sign and marquee were taken down.

Photo by Barbara Dennison

The Advent of Multi-Plex Theaters

After 1940s antitrust legislation took control of movie theaters away from film production companies, the theater-building boom waned. The advent of television and the flight to suburbia in the ‘50s permanently altered the economics of the movie industry and gave birth to the “multiplex” theater.

Minnesota’s first twin cinema was the “Cinema I and II,” later known as the “Southdale.” Built on Edina’s West 69th Street, across from Southdale Center, it opened Sept. 21, 1966. Cinema I seated 1,200 and Cinema II seated 750. There was an art gallery in the lobby where movie-goers waiting for the next feature could view paintings by local artists.

In 1975, one of Cinema I and II’s two auditoriums was divided in half to make Cinema III and in 1980 the other auditorium was also divided in two. Cinemas I and II seated 620 each while Cinemas III and IV seated 360 each. In time, the art gallery was replaced by video games. The theater closed Aug. 16, 1990, and was demolished soon after.

The Mann France Avenue Drive-in Theater opened in the early 1960s at West 78th Street and France. Although it was technically just south of the Edina/Bloomington border, it was considered part of the Edina theater “scene.” The theater was built on a landfill that had been there since the 1930s. My son Denny worked there for a couple of summers while he was in high school, “patrolling the perimeter” to discourage movie-goers from climbing over the fences without buying a ticket. The drive-in was replaced by the current high-rise Minnesota Center office building that was built on the site in the 1980s.

The “Yorktown 2” was Edina’s second twin-screen theater when it opened in 1973 on York Avenue and Hazelton Road, also near Southdale. Now known as the Yorktown Cinema Grill, it serves food and drinks before and during the movies.

Edina’s first true “multiplex” was the rebuilt, four-screen Edina Theater. The Centennial Lakes Cinema 8, which opened at 7311 France Ave. Aug. 17, 1990, was the second. Its four auditoriums are short but wide, allowing for wide screens.

A 16-screen multiplex theater project is now nearing completion at Southdale. In addition to the theater, five national chain restaurants, including P.F. Chang’s Chinese Bistro, are



Photo by Joe Sullivan

This is what the Westgate Theater building looks like today. After the theater closed in 1977, its slanted floor was filled in and now supports machinery for the Edina Cleaners and Launderers plant. The former stage now serves as a loading dock. A narrow strip of velvet drape that still hangs above the stage is the only remaining clue to its original use. The original half-cylinder, arched ceiling is still there although its acoustical tile has long since been removed.

planned for the new wing of Southdale. Today’s Southdale has 181 tenants and serves more than 14 million customers a year. Southdale general manager Christopher Cummins has said he has no doubt that the center will be as successful in the new century as it was in the last half of the 1900s.

Protecting Old Theaters from the Wrecking Ball

Growing interest in preservation of historic buildings has resulted in increasing numbers of calls for the restoration of older theaters. Restoration of the marquee of the Edina Theater, damaged in 1951 and 1981 by tornadoes, and the rebuilding of the theater’s auditorium in 1989 without destroying its front facade, marquee, sign and foyer are fine examples of what can be done to preserve older theaters while updating them to be competitive with today’s multiplex theaters.

Background material and photographs for this article came from the archival collections of the Edina Historical Society, Minnesota History Museum, Minneapolis Public Library, Hennepin County Library, University of Minnesota Libraries and the following articles and publications: “Tickets to Fantasy” by Herbert Scherer; “Show Houses—Twin Cities Style” by Kirk J. Busse; “From the Barber’s Chair” by Vern Swanson and Tom Clark; Edina Heritage Preservation Board meeting minutes; “History of Architecture of Edina, Minnesota” by William Scott, A.I.A., and Jeffrey Hess; Minneapolis Star; Edina Crier; City Pages; “Marquee on Main Street” by the University of Minnesota Gallery; Minnesota Architecture magazine; the Charles Dennison family photo album and personal interviews with Christopher Cummins and Dave Stotts.

It's Not Only Neighborly ... It's The Law

Leaves
Keep fallen leaves out of the street to help prevent clogging the storm sewer, which can lead to water runoff, backups and flooding. In addition, leaves are also extremely slippery when wet and can contribute to motor vehicle accidents.

In the fall, three street sweepers work eight to 10 hours per day for four to six weeks. If residents rake leaves from their yards into the streets, the street sweepers will not be able to keep up.

Residents should compost their leaves or contact their refuse hauler for proper disposal. Licensed haulers in the City are Aspen Waste, 651-644-3488; BFI, 952-941-5174; and Waste Management, 952-882-2300.

Edina Snow Removal Regulations
We've all seen the cartoons depicting one neighbor shoveling snow out of the driveway, into the driveway of the property owner next door. Aside from this practice disrupting neighborhood peace, it is also illegal. Any snow removed from your walkways, driveways or sidewalks must remain on your property. Do not shovel snow into the street or onto your neighbor's property.

If you have a sidewalk, Edina law states that you must keep it plowed or shoveled for the safety of you and your neighbors.

If a fire hydrant is located on your property, please remember that you need to clear snow away from it. As soon as the snow stops falling, clear away the snow so that the hydrant is visible. The few minutes it takes to provide

access to a fire hydrant will save precious time in an emergency.

Edina Snow Parking Regulations
Many Minnesotans have made the mistake of parking their cars or trucks on the street during a snowstorm, only to find later that their vehicles have been "buried" or "plowed in." Seeing a parking ticket on your windshield would only add to the frustration. You can avoid a citation or tow by following these rules.

No vehicle may be parked on a City street, highway or alley under the following conditions:

- When 1 inch or more of snow has fallen, until it has been plowed to the curbline.
- For six hours after the snowfall stops, unless traffic signs specifically allow you to do so or if you are engaged in certain job-related activities as described in the City Code.
- From 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. Nov. 1 to March 31.

It is extremely important for residents to keep their vehicles off the roadways during snow events. Edina's Public Works Department has a reputation for providing top-notch snow removal services, but staff members need your help. Cars parked on the street make it difficult for snowplow operators to maneuver and also prevent the street from being thoroughly plowed. By parking in driveways or lots, you will avoid parking tickets and the expense and inconvenience associated with towing.

For more information, contact Public Works Coordinator Steve Johnson, 952-826-0301.

Fire Department To Host Open House

Children can be firefighters for a day at the Edina Fire Department's Open House Sunday, Oct. 14.

The Open House, to be held just after Fire Prevention Week, will follow a series of classroom presentations in local schools. "Fire Prevention Week and the Open House are rewarding programs, whether you are a resident or visitor, child or adult," said Fire Chief Marty Scheerer. "The knowledge gained through attending these events could save your life or the life of someone near and dear. Once a fire starts, there is no time to develop a plan. Our open house gets people thinking about fire safety and developing a plan for what to do should a fire break out."



Approximately 11 people per day die in home fires in the two countries. "Many lives can be saved if people react immediately when a fire or smoke alarm sounds," Scheerer said. "We are urging everyone to learn the theme of this year's Fire Prevention Week, 'Know When to Go.'"

The three-hour Open House, which will begin at 1 p.m. at Fire Station No. 1, 6250 Tracy Ave., will feature demonstrations and



games. Children will be allowed to try on gear, spray water using a fire hose and climb through a fire safety house. Older children and adults will enjoy demonstrations on the use of fire extinguishers and sprinkler systems. In addition, the Special Operations Team will set up some of its equipment and firefighters/paramedics will have an ambulance open for inspection. NSP will set up a display on power line safety and the State Patrol is expected to land one of its helicopters at nearby Countryside Park to show how it uses its search cameras. Sparky the Fire Dog will likely make an appearance.

"The event is a positive experience for the entire community. The day is action-packed, with many hands-on activities," said Scheerer, adding that approximately 1,000 people attend the annual event. "Our firefighters enjoy the time spent with the community, educating people about what we do and fire prevention."

For more information about the upcoming Open House, contact the Fire Department at 952-826-0377.

VEAP Announces Holiday Programs

Help make the holidays brighter for area families in need this season by making a donation to Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People (VEAP), which serves the communities of Edina, Bloomington and Richfield.

As part of VEAP’s Thanksgiving program, qualifying low-income families will each receive a bag of pre-packed groceries and a supermarket gift certificate to cover the cost of perishable food items and items special to their own Thanksgiving traditions. You can help by donating gift certificates to Cub Foods or Rainbow Foods in \$10 or \$20 denominations or food items such as dessert mixes, muffin mixes, rice, boxed potatoes and the like. Money to cover the cost of certificates or food items is also appreciated.

Volunteers are needed to distribute food the Monday and Tuesday before Thanksgiving and to deliver meals to homebound seniors and disabled individuals and couples Thanksgiving Day.

Donations for the Thanksgiving program need to be received at the VEAP office by Nov. 15.

VEAP will also distribute bags of pre-packed groceries and supermarket gift certificates for Christmas. Due to the significant increase in usage of the local food shelf, VEAP officials expect a 15 percent increase in individuals requesting help with Thanksgiving and Christmas meals. Volunteers expect to pack 1,300 grocery bags—each with an estimated value of \$25—and distribute gift certificates valued at more than \$38,000.

In addition to the Christmas meal, VEAP will also organize a “Holiday Store” for qualifying families. Parents will come to the store and select donated gifts for their children. Following are suggested gifts to donate:

Riding, crib and tub, developmental, push-pull and electronic toys are suggested for children ages birth to 3. Popular brands include See & Say, Little Tykes, Fisher Price, Playskool and Tyco.

Electronic, remote-controlled, building, cooking or baking and talking toys are suggested for children ages 4 to 7, as are multicultural dolls, Beanie Babies, play tents, sleeping bags, children’s videotapes, music players, games and puzzles.

Most gifts are needed for children ages 8 to 18. Suggested gift items include cosmetic bags and shaving kits, diaries and journals, stationery, compact disc or cassette players, cameras, telephones, bed sheets and comforters, jewelry boxes, electronic games, calendars and daily planners, bath gel sets and cosmetics, flashlights, tool sets, remote-controlled vehicles, travel carry-on bags, fishing poles and tackle, jerseys, T-shirts, wallets and billfolds, clock radios, watches, desk lamps, videos, sleeping bags, blankets, hockey sticks, ice skates, science kits, tackle and tool boxes, skateboards, scooters, books and audio books.

Gift certificates for older children may also be purchased. Suggested retailers are Target, GAP, Old Navy, Southdale Center, Bath & Body Works, Kohl’s,

Mall of America, Sam Goody, Best Buy and local cinemas. Gift certificates should be purchased in \$15 or \$20 denominations.

New unwrapped gifts must be delivered to the VEAP office, 9731 James Ave. S., Bloomington, by Dec. 14, or to the Armory, 3300 W. 98th St., by Dec. 17. Through the first part of December, drop boxes will be available at Edina City Hall, 4801 W. 50th St., and Fire Station No. 1, 6250 Tracy Ave.

Volunteers are needed to pre-sort gifts, set up the Holiday Store, help with gift and food distribution on Dec. 18 and 19 and deliver hot meals on Christmas Day.

For more information on the food or gift drives or to volunteer, contact the VEAP office, 952-888-9616, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.



- Know where your children are and who they are with.
- Talk to your children about rules and consequences of alcohol and substance use.
- Know your child's friends' parents and what their rules are.
- Expect great things from your children.

Tri-City Partners work to promote health, reduce risks, and build assets in our youth and in the Bloomington, Edina, and Richfield communities.

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For more information call Bloomington Public Health, 952-563-8900



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- Youth Programs

... and much more!

Tie A Red Ribbon During Minnesota Chemical Health Week

By **Kathy Iverson**
Chemical Health Coordinator

Just before Thanksgiving, you might see white lunch bags filled with red ribbons at area doctor's offices, local libraries, schools and Edina City Hall.

Do you know what the red ribbons symbolize? They are in honor of Minnesota Chemical Health Week. The 13th annual campaign will highlight the prevention of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. By displaying the red ribbons, you are showing your support of prevention efforts in the state.

We are proud to say that there are many prevention accomplishments to celebrate this year. The local asset-building initiative, Connecting With Kids, strengthens our greatest resource—our kids—by involving them in our community. Through that effort, we can foster strong adult-child relationships. On a state level, there is also the favorable settlement (especially for the children of Minnesota) of the tobacco lawsuit, and new state laws for both criminal prosecution and civil liability of adults who provide alcohol to underage youth (Kevin's Law and the ZAP Bill). Additionally, Edina Chemical Health Partners and the Tri-City Partners for Healthy Youth and Families continue to focus their efforts in new and exciting ways to engage our community in developing positive life skills.

You can be part of the campaign, too. Support efforts for a healthier community. Build relationships with your neighbors and the parents of your children's friends. Talk

about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs with your children and grandchildren. Model a healthy, balanced lifestyle.

Take a red ribbon. We used to ask people to tie ribbons to their car antennae, but there aren't as many car antennae now. That hasn't led to a shortage of places that people have used, though. We've seen the red ribbons on backpacks, computer terminals, purses, classroom bulletin boards and baby strollers. Get one today and show your support!

For more information on Chemical Health Week, contact Iverson by calling 952-929-7627 or via e-mail, menze002@tc.umn.edu.

Home Rehab Funds for Qualified Edina Home Owners



You may qualify for up to \$15,000 to make repairs or necessary improvements to your Edina home through the **Hennepin County Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program**. This program provides deferred repayment funds on a first-come-first-served basis to people who can show financial need. If you would like to receive information, income guidelines, qualification summaries, interest rates, and applications, please call Associate Planner Joyce Repya at the Edina Planning Department, (952) 826-0462. Dozens of Edina residents have protected the value of their homes by using this program. If your primary residence is located in Edina and needs repair or structural improvements, please give Joyce a call.



**CITY OF EDINA
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

Museum Takes Visitors Back In Time Through Film

Viewers watch with keen interest as the first scene of a new film plays on the screen before them. The scene is set in 1822 and two teenage boys from the Fort St. Anthony military reservation are canoeing up Minnehaha Creek. They discover Lake Minnetonka, which they had heard about from the Dakotah Sioux tribe. In the process, the boys become the first Caucasians to set foot on the western part of Richfield Township, which would one day become Edina.

The Edina Historical Society recently finished "History of Edina," a 30-minute video made possible by a generous donation from resident Cuyler Adams in honor of his late wife, Connie.

The video, written by Joe Sullivan and filmed by Gene Updike, chronicles the City's history through the early 1960s. Besides the exploration of Minnehaha Creek by Joseph Renshaw Brown and William Snelling reenacted in the first scene, historical topics in the film include the coming of the Irish into the Cahill Neighborhood in the 1850s after the west side of the Mississippi River was opened for settlement, activity and development around the former Edina Mill, establishment of the community's first schools (Cahill, Edina and Wooddale) and incorporation of the village. The film also covers the transformation of the creek and suburbanization of the community.



Actors Joe Sullivan, Chanhassen, and Matt Sydeski, Minneapolis, reenact the exploration of Minnehaha Creek by Joe Brown and Will Snelling in 1822. The teenage boys were the first Caucasians to set foot on the western part of Richfield Township, which later became Edina.

Besides the creek exploration, a reenactment of class at Cahill School is included in the film. The rest of the film is made up of pictures from the Historical Society's collection; interviews with John McCauley and Frank Cardarelle, descendants of the community's settlers; and footage of the interior of the Baird Home, which is on the National Register of Historic Places.

The film will run continuously in the Museum's permanent display area on days the facility is open. "People who grew up in the area or are very interested in the City's background will enjoy 'History of Edina,'" said Kathleen Wetherall, executive director of the Edina Historical Society. "We expect the video to be a tool for teaching history to the children of Edina in a way that will engage their interest. Community organizations, church groups and organizers of class reunions will also be eager to use the video."

The Museum, located at 4711 W. 70th St. in Arneson Acres Park, is open 9 a.m. to noon Thursdays and 10 a.m. to noon Saturdays and by appointment.

For more information on the video or to arrange a tour of the Museum, call the Edina Historical Society, 952-928-4577.

Edina Family Center Marks 20th 'Birthday'



Photo by Polly Norman

Like a child's birthday party, there will be cake, ice cream, balloons and clowns when the Edina Family Center celebrates its 20th "birthday" this school year.

As part of Community Education, Edina Public Schools began offering a parent/child education program in the fall of 1981. Three courses were offered for parents and children ages 2-5 to enjoy activities together and learn about child development, parental support and family issues. A handful of one-time parent education classes were also offered, covering such topics as discipline, building self-esteem, sibling relationships and family communication.

Three years later, state legislation allowed local school districts to levy for Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) programs. Edina Public Schools chose to participate and the program was expanded. The Family Center continued to grow. A parents' advisory council

was established and childcare, preschool and summer programs were put into place. In more recent years, School Readiness and "Hand-in-Hand," a unique program that brings together 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds who are typically developing with those who have special needs, were added.

Today, the Edina Family Center offers more than 60 Early Childhood Family Education classes—compared with three offered 20 years ago—with a long waiting list of families who wish to participate. The Family Center occupies more than 8,700 square feet at the Edina Community Center, 5701 Normandale Road, and space at the Good Samaritan United Methodist Church, 5730 Grove St.

Since 1989, the Edina Family Center has been licensed by the Department of Human Services (DHS). DHS is responsible for ensuring compliance with state laws regulating learning centers for young children by setting safety, health and educational



Photo by Polly Norman

Early childhood teachers provide engaging learning toys and tools to help children grow and develop.



Photo by Polly Norman

The Edina Family Center, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary, offers a School Readiness program. Among the many families who benefit from this specialized program are those who speak English as a second language.

standards. DHS reviews the environment, staffing, policies and parent handbook at the Family Center.

Although approximately 97 percent of school districts in Minnesota have an ECFE program, Edina's is one of the largest.

"We have continued to respond to the community's needs," said Coordinator Nancy Delin, who has been with the Family Center since 1990. "We have been successful because we hold to our mission of creating a loving, nurturing environment for families with young children. We create an environment for parents to feel supported and get good information."

In ECFE programs, parents and children enjoy activities together for a portion of the class time. Trained parent

educators lead discussions related to child development, parental support and family issues while early childhood teachers provide engaging learning opportunities and activities to help children grow and develop.

Parents can also enroll children ages 2 and older in an ECFE class with a child-only day where children attend without their parents, further developing social, emotional, physical and intellectual skills through the curriculum.

The Family Center offers three types of childcare: sibling care, block time and drop-in time. Sibling care is for parents who need care for one child while attending an ECFE class with another. Block time is childcare scheduled in advance. Drop-in time is childcare scheduled when something comes up at the last minute. Childcare is available up to three hours a day, with a



Photo by Polly Norman

A trained parent educator leads a discussion related to child development.

continued on next page

maximum of nine hours per week, for infants and toddlers. Preschoolers can attend up to four hours a day, with a maximum of 12 hours per week.

“ECFE is blending high-quality education for children with support and services for parents,” Delin said. “We have a very talented and experienced staff, but parents also get support from one another.”



Photo by Polly Norman

A mother and child participate in a hands-on activity in an Early Childhood Family Education program at the Edina Family Center.

Because the Edina Family Center is nearing capacity, Delin said the 20th anniversary is extra special. As a result, several activities have been planned to mark the occasion.

An appreciation dinner and program will be held in October for past and present Family Center staff, advisory council members, Community Education Services Board members, and Board of Education members. A family birthday party will be held in May 2002, at Rosland Park with live entertainment, petting zoo, face-painting, clowns and, of course, birthday cake.

“This is an important year in the history of the Edina Family Center,” Delin said. “I hope the entire community will celebrate with us.”



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Braemar Is Home Course For 'Minnesota Golf Legend'

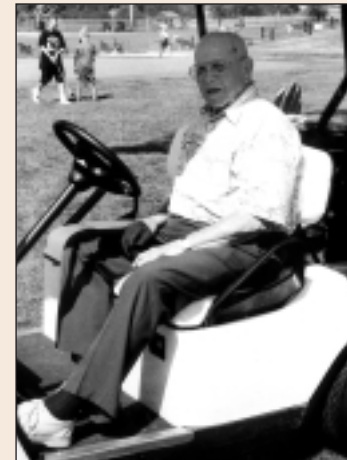


Photo by Polly Norman

Pat Sawyer

Longtime Edina resident Pat Sawyer made his mark on the game of golf on a national level, playing alongside such greats as Sam Snead and Bobby Jones. Today, the 88-year-old still plays golf every Thursday afternoon with his foursome at the City of Edina's Braemar Golf Course.

As the Minnesota Golf Association celebrates its centennial, Braemar Golf Course staff, Sawyer and others are celebrating the rise in golf over the past 100 years.

After years of tagging along with his father and brothers, Sawyer first played the game of golf at age 7 at the Golden Valley Country Club. The Minneapolis native played in his first tournament at age 11 at the inaugural State Junior championship in 1924 at Minikahda. He didn't fare as well as he would have liked in the tournament, but remained dedicated to the sport.

Sawyer was one of just four boys on his high school team and there were few other teams to play. He was part of another team of four or five at the University of Minnesota.

By the age of 20, Sawyer had amassed a number of championship hardware, having won two state amateurs, a

state high school championship, two state junior titles, one Resorters Crown and two Pine-to-Palms. According to information compiled by the Minnesota Golf Association, he later went on to capture five straight Resorters titles from 1947 to 1951 and added the 1946 and 1948 State Amateurs to his list of victories.

Sawyer's mastery in the state Open was just as impressive. As a 22-year-old amateur, he won the tournament in 1935. After turning pro the next year, he captured the title once again on his home course, Golden Valley. Providing evidence that his game held up over time, he won the Open for a third time 20 years later, again at Golden Valley. He competed twice in the National Amateur.

Sawyer worked as head professional at Golden Valley from 1935 to 1937. Then, in the summer of 1937, came the thrill of his life – competing in the U.S. Open at Oakland Hills in Michigan as a shy 24-year-old. Sawyer finished 14th in the national Open, but says he felt as good as if he had won.

Decades later, fellow Minnesota Valley Country Club members convinced Sawyer to join the Braemar Men's Club. He joined as an “honorary member” and has been playing in the summer league every week since.

“Braemar is a great course,” said Sawyer, who spends his retirement playing courses throughout the metropolitan area. “So many of us hate to play it because it's tough – a lot of balls are lost out there! The staff keeps the course in great condition and it's easy to get to know everybody out there. It's a great place to play the game.”

Ken Carlson Named Deputy Police Chief

Longtime Edina officer Ken Carlson has earned his wings. Carlson recently traded in his golden lapel bars for eagles, symbolizing his promotion to the position of Deputy Police Chief.

Carlson began his new position July 2. He succeeds Sylvester “Chip” Schwartz, who retired in June after more than 30 years of service to the Edina Police Department.

Carlson, a native of Edina, began his career with the Edina Police Department in 1979 as a dispatcher. Later that year, he became a patrolman. He was promoted to sergeant in 1995 and lieutenant in 2000. Earlier this year, he completed a 10-week training program for police management at the Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy.

“Ken has 22 years of experience with the Edina Police Department in a wide variety of assignments, ranging from dispatcher to Investigative Lieutenant. This broad range of experience will provide the knowledge base for Ken to perform the duties of the Deputy Chief,” said Police Chief Mike Siitari. “He has the necessary blend of skills and abilities to successfully meet the challenges of his new position.”



Longtime police officer Ken Carlson began his new position as Deputy Police Chief in July.

City Manager Gordon Hughes echoed the Police Chief’s comments. “Ken’s appointment follows the tradition of promoting from within whenever possible,” he said. “Ken has demonstrated a long-term commitment to our mission of protecting and serving the community. The City is fortunate to have officers of Ken’s experience and abilities who we can draw on for critical assignments in the Police Department.”

Badge No. 126 has already had many career highlights. Carlson is most proud of a 1994 arson case he helped investigate. He uncovered evidence that tied a local arson to two others in the metropolitan area. Without his work and that evidence, the arsonist may not have been convicted. Carlson is also proud of the way the Police Department responded to the 2000 armed robbery of the former Firststar Bank, an incident in which Officer Mike Blood was seriously injured.

“I am not only proud of the way our officers responded to the robbery, but also of the support the Police Department received from the community afterward,” Carlson said. “The community really rallied for us. To me, that says a lot about the service we provide.”

As Deputy Chief, Carlson is responsible for overseeing Edina’s patrol and investigative divisions, recruiting and hiring new officers, training officers, leadership development and purchasing new equipment. He will also work with residents and serve as a stand-in for Siitari.



Carlson jumped into his new position, beginning the process of hiring new officers during his first month on the job. It is one of his goals to improve recruiting efforts to attract outstanding police officer candidates. Carlson looks forward

to establishing other goals to meet the department’s mission. “The Edina Police Department has a solid reputation of providing service courteously and quickly. When residents say they have a problem, we work to address that problem with them,” Carlson said. “I am proud to be part of that tradition and look forward to serving the community in my new position.”



Show your community pride!

The Edina Historical Society is raising money for its exhibits and programs by selling Edina t-shirts. Cost is \$12 each or 2/\$20.

Stop by the Edina Museum today to buy your t-shirt!

952.928.4577

Volunteer Puts Paw Prints On Fairview Southdale Visiting Program

One of Fairview Southdale Hospital's many volunteers stops at a family lounge outside of the medical facility's surgical center. A family there is in tears, concerned about their loved one undergoing surgery.

The volunteer spends some time with the family in the lounge. By the time she leaves, members of the family are smiling and more at ease.

Although all volunteers at the hospital work to support patients and their families, this one reaches out in a unique way. This one is a friendly golden retriever named Shadow.

Modeled after a similar program at Fairview-University Medical Center, a pet visiting program was implemented at Edina's Fairview Southdale Hospital in late 1999. Research has shown that pets help reduce stress, lower blood pressure, reduce heart attacks and decrease the frequency of hospital and clinic visits.



Shadow, a 6-year-old golden retriever, visits a patient at Fairview Southdale Hospital. Shadow visits the hospital most Tuesday afternoons, averaging 32 patient-room visits per week.

Photo by Polly Norman

The idea of pet therapy has been gaining attention within the medical community over the past few years and there is research to support the idea. *The Journal of American Geriatrics Society* published a study in March 1999 stating that seniors who own pets are generally more active than those who don't. The study also found that seniors with pets exhibit a lower occurrence of depression than those without. In 1995, the *American Journal of Cardiology* detailed a study that followed the progress of 400 heart attack victims. The study found that pet owners had a significantly higher one-year post-heart attack survival rate than non-pet owners. In 1992, Australian researchers concluded that pet owners are at lower risk for heart attack and heart disease than those without animal companionship.

Director of Volunteer Services Sally Davis said findings such as these, along with the success of pet therapy at Fairview-University and other medical centers, prompted Fairview Southdale to try the approach.

Shadow had occasionally come to the hospital with her late owner, Shirley Anderson, who worked at the hospital as a secretary for more than 30 years prior to her recent death. Because of the canine's temperament and staff's familiarity with her, Shadow was evaluated for the program and eventually became its first canine visitor.

"It takes a very special dog to do this sort of thing. Most family dogs would not be appropriate for a hospital setting," said Davis, pointing out that in order to be in a hospital, dogs must not be bothered by noises or smells, follow instructions and interact appropriately one-on-one and in groups.



Photo by Polly Norman

Another hospital volunteer gives Shadow a treat in radiation therapy. Shadow is one of four dogs that is part of the hospital's pet visiting program. Dogs visit lounges and the orthopedic, oncology and radiation therapy units of the hospital.

Shadow is bathed and brushed thoroughly the day before her visits to the hospital. One of Shadow's owners, Bud Anderson, brings her to Fairview Southdale every Tuesday at 2 p.m., ready to work with her volunteer hospital identification tag on her harness. Two other volunteers meet her and the three do their work together.

Shadow carries a brown wicker basket in her mouth to each room. Inside are cards for the patients. Each card, paid for by local resident and volunteer Gene Johnson, has a picture of Shadow with the message, "Shadow says HEAL."

"[A patient] was spending several days at a time at Fairview going through chemotherapy in hopes of winning the grueling

battle of cancer. The pain was barely tolerable even with high doses of morphine. It was only when Shadow 'the four-legged' volunteer with her basket of comfort cards in her mouth and tail wagging came for a visit that [the patient] was able to cast aside his ailments and receive what she had to offer. It did not require an exchange of words that can be awkward and straining at these times. It is the touch and bodily responses by Shadow that are enough to create a moment of comfort and serenity for any patient," wrote the family of one patient in a thank-you letter to the hospital.

The mother of another patient wrote, "No therapy or medicine could do what [Shadow] can do. In fact, I would not have minded if [Shadow] laid on my son's bed with him!"

Davis said such feedback reinforces the validity of the program. "The feedback from patients, families and staff has been positive," she said. "The pet visits boost morale for everyone. Patients sometimes walk out of their rooms wearing their gowns and IVs to see Shadow."

Fairview Southdale's pet visiting program was evaluated last year by administrators and managers on the patient care units. After a successful evaluation, the program was expanded. Several other trained dogs are now visiting patients, including Lexi, a rottweiler; Rex, a black Labrador and Cheng Kee, a Sheba-Enu.

"Shadow helped set the stage for the local pet visiting program," said Bud Anderson. "She is a very special part of our family—and the Fairview Southdale family."

A 'Grand View': Construction Of Library And Senior Center Under Way

Construction is under way on the 36,000-square-foot building that will soon be home to the Edina Senior Center and Edina Community Library. Labeled a "cooperative venture that serves as a model for other communities," the project is expected to be complete early next year.

The building anchors the Grandview Square redevelopment project, which also includes an office building and residential units. It is located at the former Kunz-Lewis site, an area south of Eden Avenue and west of Minnesota Highway 100. Opus Northwest Construction is overseeing construction of the office building and library/senior center complex. Ron Clark Construction is building the townhouses.



The City of Edina held a groundbreaking ceremony for the Edina Community Library and Edina Senior Center July 9. Approximately 75 people attended the event the day construction crews began work.

The new library, part of the Hennepin County Library System, will replace its current facility on West 50th Street with needed upgrades and approximately 4,000 square feet in added floor space. The extra space will house an expanded meeting room, a large living room area with a working gas fireplace, conference room and quiet study area. More lounge seating will be available at the new library and more space will be provided for computers. The expanded library will provide more space for staff offices and a children's room.

"We're very cramped right now," said Senior Librarian Marcia Wattson. "Though some patrons have expressed some sadness about leaving behind a library they have frequented for 30 years, people will grow to appreciate the new facility just as much, if not more. In addition, our close proximity to the Senior Center will increase our connections with the senior population. It will be a nice combination of activities."

The approximately 17,000-square-foot Senior Center on the building's walkout level will be home for one of the most vibrant and growing programs in the City's Park and Recreation Department. Members of the Senior Center have been working on plans for a facility of their own for more than a decade. The Senior Center is currently located on the third floor of the Edina Community Center, 5701 Normandale Road.

Officials expect membership to grow once the facility moves. "Based on what has happened in other communities and because of Edina's aging population, I believe we will



An Opus architect's rendering of the library and Senior Center illustrates the "Old World" feel of the Grandview Square redevelopment project.

see a significant change in our membership numbers," said Senior Center Director Sue Weigle, adding that more than 600 seniors currently participate in exercise classes, organized activities and scheduled seminars or receive the monthly newsletter. Some have shied away from activities at the current facility because of its third-floor location.

The new facility will result in additional City offices, as the City will purchase the existing library. The City plans to build a 4,100-square-foot addition and move the Police Department into the renovated building. Once empty, the lower level of City Hall will provide office space for other City departments. That project is scheduled to be complete sometime in 2003.

For more information on construction of the Edina Community Library and Edina Senior Center complex, contact the library, 952-922-1611, or Senior Center, 612-928-4580.



Edina, Richfield To Host Senior Safety Seminar

Late last year, the clothes of an elderly Edina woman caught fire as she was cooking. She fell and was knocked unconscious. Although the fire did little damage to her apartment, the woman died.

“When I walked into that apartment, the only thing that was burned was the victim. This should not have happened,” said Edina Fire Marshal Tom Jenson. “This woman should be alive today—cooking, talking with her grandkids and doing things she enjoyed.”

“We have to work to get more information out to seniors in our communities so that they know how to prevent accidents and react in an emergency.”

The cities of Edina and Richfield Tuesday, Oct. 30, will host “Falls, Fire and Frauds,” an educational safety seminar for seniors. The event will be held 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Richfield Community Center, 7700 Nicollet Ave. S. Sessions will be presented by members of the Bloomington Public Health Department, Edina and Richfield Police Departments and the Edina Fire Department.

One of the sessions will cover fall prevention. “In Minnesota, less than half of those 65 or older who are hospitalized after a fall return home. Most falls occur during the daytime and at home,” said Edina Senior Center Director Sue Weigle. “We want to provide seniors with the information they need to keep from falling.”

To illustrate the seriousness of falls, Weigle offered the following statistics:

- 25 to 33 percent of people over 65 fall each year.
- 40 to 50 percent of those who fall will fall again.
- Women fall more than men, but men are more likely to die as the result of a fall.
- Hennepin County has one of the highest fall mortality rates in the country. Between 1993 and 1997, nearly 800 people died from falls in the county.

In addition, Jensen will discuss kitchen safety, testing and maintenance of smoke detectors, the use of space heaters and how to plan an escape from a fire. In addition he will remind participants of the City’s smoke detector installation program. As part of a program sponsored by the Hennepin County Health Department, the fire department installs smoke detectors equipped with 10-year batteries in single-family homes of qualifying seniors ages 62 and older. Two paramedic/firefighters install the detectors, one per floor outside of sleeping areas.

Edina and Richfield crime prevention specialists will give an interactive presentation on fraud awareness. Each participant will receive a “fanny pack” to carry their personal belongings. “We want to teach people that it is safer to carry their wallets and other belongings on their person rather than in a purse,” said Molly Anderson, Edina Crime Prevention Specialist. “Too often, purses are snatched out of shopping carts or left sitting out in the open where they are easy targets for thieves.”

In addition to wallet thefts, the police departments will also discuss con games and telephone scams.



Hogan, a police narcotics dog, will give a demonstration at the seminar.

Before the safety seminar concludes with lunch, participants will have the opportunity to see a demonstration by a police narcotics dog and visit vendor booths, getting a close-up view of police firearms and firefighter gear.

“The Senior Safety Seminar is going to be a good time. Sessions will be short and informative, lively and entertaining,” Jenson said. “We will allow plenty of time for questions so that everyone

walks away having learned something valuable. Our goal is to prevent some of the type of accidents that claim lives.”

Cost for the safety seminar is \$5 per person, which includes morning snacks, a boxed lunch, fanny pack and door prizes. Pre-registration is required by Oct. 12. Space is limited to 75 people.

For more information, call the Edina Senior Center, 612-928-4580, or the Richfield Community Center, 612-861-9360.



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'Looking Glass: Our Country's History Reflected Through Edina's Pioneer Women'

When Amie Leah Cooper was born Oct. 5, 1839, Martin Van Buren was President. There was a presidential election when she was 2 and William Henry Harrison became President March 3, 1841. Harrison caught pneumonia at his inauguration and died less than a month later. His running mate, John Tyler, became President. Our country had been led by three different Presidents before Amie was 3.



Amie Leah Bull
After the western side of the Mississippi River opened for settlement, Amie's father packed up his family in May 1857, and moved to Minneapolis. Amie attended Union High School, where she was inspired to learn and teach.

Amie became a teacher and taught for six years, always being sought out because of her qualifications. During much of this time, the Civil War was in progress.

In 1866, a year after President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, Amie married James Bull, a recent widower. She moved to Edina where she lived a long and productive life.

Amie was born on a farm in Lancaster, Penn. Her father, Milton Cooper, was a successful farmer. From what Amie wrote in her memoirs, she had a lovely childhood in a substantial brick farmhouse. Members of the Cooper family were Quakers, as were most of their neighbors.

To learn more about Amie's life, visit the Edina Historical Society's winter exhibit, "Looking Glass: Our Country's History Reflected Through Edina's Pioneer Women." The exhibit, which opens Nov. 1, will take visitors through the 19th and 20th centuries. The lives of about 30 women will be highlighted.

"We expect the exhibit to be a tool for teaching the children of Edina history in a way that will truly engage their interest. They will learn about national historical events while learning about local women," said Kathleen Wetherall, executive director of the Historical Society. "We also expect to be able to put this exhibit on loan in whole or in part to other businesses in the Twin Cities because it will show the interaction of the growth of the greater community of cities and towns in the metropolitan area."

The Museum, located at 4711 W. 70th St. in Arneson Acres Park, is open 9 a.m. to noon Thursdays, 10 a.m. to noon Saturdays and by appointment.

For more information about the exhibit or to arrange a tour, call the Edina Historical Society, 952-928-4577.

City Offers Tips To Slow The Flow Of Direct Mail

According to figures generated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 5.2 million tons of direct mail is sent each year to mailboxes in this country. Of that, just 0.98 million tons is recycled, resulting in 4.2 million tons of garbage. That adds up to a sizeable "junk" mail problem!

For some residents, direct mail—catalogs, flyers, credit card offers and advertising mail—is an interesting addition to daily piles of mail. But many others consider it unwelcome and unwanted. If you are interested in slowing the flow of unwanted mail, the City of Edina's Recycling Division urges you to follow these simple steps:

- Register with the Direct Marketing Association's free Mail Preference Service. Send a postcard with your name and address to Mail Preference Service, P.O. Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735-9008 or download, print and mail a form found on the Association's website, www.the-dma.org. Your name and address will be added to a "do not mail" list. Association members agree not to use your name in marketing products and services, or trade or sell your name to other marketers.
- Contact only those mailers from whom you do not wish to receive mail. Look at the piece of mail to see if there is a telephone number to call or write them a note or e-mail message. Use simple language, such as, "Please remove my name from your marketing database. In addition, please do not pass along my name to others through mail list sales or trades."
- Contact consumer credit bureaus to remove your name from lists for credit card solicitations. The nation's major bureaus, Equifax, Experian, Innovis and Trans

Union, established a toll-free number for individuals to get off lists for such solicitations. The number is 1-888-5-OPTOUT (1-888-567-8688).

- Ask your local utilities and service providers—telephone, gas, electric, water, cable, newspaper, bank and insurance companies—about their privacy policies. Find out what information they will and will not share about you. Most companies will restrict what they share about their customers, but only if specifically told to do so.

Even after doing all of this, you might continue to receive direct mail. "Pieces of unwanted mail should not be tossed in the garbage. It should be recycled," reminds City of Edina Recycling Coordinator Solvei Wilmot. "We would be going a long way in landfill diversion if all junk mail was recycled."

For more information on reducing unwanted mail or the City's recycling program, contact Recycling Coordinator Solvei Wilmot, 952-826-0463.



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